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ABSTRACT

This study focused on the use of television by the College of Library and Information Science at the University of South Carolina in meeting the preservice and continuing education needs of information professionals in the state. Following a general introduction, which discusses the use of technology in both librarianship and higher education, background information about the College of Library and Information Science's outreach program is provided. A brief history of the use of video in the college is then presented, including the production of the first telecourse, "Jump Over the Moon: Sharing Literature with Young Children," which is currently used by over 230 colleges around the world, and the subsequent adoption of teleconferencing for additional library science courses. Administrative and delivery issues involved with the utilization of television for instructional delivery are also discussed, including: (1) quality control concerns; (2) selection of courses to offer via teleconferencing; (3) faculty resistance and concerns; (4) lack of the social and emotional support provided by the conventional teacher-and-class situation; and (5) follow-up services for the learner. A discussion of concerns and issues involved in teaching adults via telecourses and an invitation for librarians and information scientists to use technology to facilitate information transfer for positive human benefits conclude the report. A six-page list of references is provided. (JB)

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ELECTRONIC OUTREACH: TELEVISION, THE DISTANT LEARNER AND THE LIBRARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to present a case study of the use of television in the pre-service and continuing education needs of information professionals in South Carolina by the College of Library and Information Science, University of South Carolina. Included with descriptions of specific experiences of teleconferencing and telecourse production undertaken by the College is a description of the literature related to each of the experiences. After four years of using television as an instructional delivery system, the conclusion is that it is effective in and efficient for the instructional program.

Introduction

Some Foundations in Librarianship

Jesse Shera has left us with an intellectual inheritance from which we are still drawing meaning and direction for our discipline and profession. One which has been a guide to me and has had special meaning both to my practicing of the profession and teaching others is his notion that the basic purpose of librarianship is the "optimum social utility of the graphic record." I interpret that to mean that we as a profession have an obligation to the people on this planet to help them in any way we can to access and use the information which has been gathered and packaged in the graphic record--the book, the film, the magnetic disk, the video disk, the human mind.

My purpose today is to share with you some of the personal and institutional experiences from the University of South Carolina which have been dedicated to realizing Dean Shera's

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ideal by bringing quality educational experiences to the information profession in South Carolina through electronic outreach. The title of my session--Electronic Outreach: Television, The Distant Learner and the Library School.

First, I would like to thank the coordinators of this conference for allowing me to participate. I am thrilled to be a part of this international experience. With our world so frequently in the shadows of disaster and suffering, it is good to be with those dedicated to a profession which has the potential of helping to curb violence and hatred, to bring hope to the hungry and disenfranchised and to perpetuate a world community while helping to maintain a cultural record of each of the world's peoples. We have used papyrus, clay, vellum, bark, stone, metal, paper, plastic, electricity and the human voice to preserve and transfer information from the valleys of the Nile to the valleys of our skyscraper cities; from the cave homes of our ancestors to the tenement homes of our neighbors; from the cloisters of the Dark Ages to the classrooms of our new educational renaissance; from chained tomes to electronic access. We should be proud of this heritage, proud of our growth, proud of our commitment to humanity and proud to be a part of a profession whose challenge is to inform, instruct, inspire and nurture through the effective transfer of information.

We have seen in last part of this century a move toward outreach, taking library resources and going beyond the doors of the library to the crowded streets, the dusty country roads, snow choked backcountry and even directly into people's homes. We

have seen also a move toward outreach into the place of business, corporate facility and government agency the profession attempting to go to those who need information, finding out their needs and prescribing for them an information package, resource or system. A good deal of this outreach has come from the hearts of women and men who have believed in the social responsibility of the library and our profession--optimum social utility means optimum access, and optimum access frequently means going to the people rather than having the people come to us.

It also means serving all of humanity, not just the economically or academically elite. It means serving the African child, the British scholar, the Canadian trapper, the Columbian farmer, the Russian scientist, the Japanese business person, the Christian minister, the Buddhist monk, the tenement dwellers and mansion owners--it means helping to get the information people need to the people who need it. The community might be a city, college, industrial plant, farm, office building, county, school house, village, state, nation or planet, but our responsibility remains the same--to facilitate information transfer--optimum social utility of the graphic record. Optimum social utility depends on good libraries staffed by well educated librarians. Well educated librarians depend upon the effective programs of initial and continuing education provided by library schools which brings us specifically to the focus of my presentation, the use of electronic outreach to provide quality educational opportunities in library and information science. As the people of the world become accustomed to and dependent upon the latest technology to meet their daily information needs, it seems

appropriate that those who teach information professionals make optimum use of those technologies in the teaching as well as the information delivery process.

I call your attention to these notions because they are at the heart of our use of electronic outreach in the College of Library and Information Science, University of South Carolina. I belabor the "why" and the background to our choice, because the technology, which I plan to show you, is almost self evident. As one writer has said, we have spent most of our time discussing and describing the technology rather than the people who are impacted by that technology. (Wiesner, p.218) My point is that we must have a foundation on which to construct our technological marvels lest they become monuments to themselves and to our well meaning, but unguided visions. These marvels may be online catalogs, videodiscs or the use of telecommunications for information transfer, but our ultimate goal is optimum social utility of the graphic record--information for the people.

Some Foundations in Higher Education

In a very similar way as the library, institutions of higher education have found that they too must reach out into the communities they serve. A number of developments have contributed to the need for these institutions to remove some of the traditional barriers such as distance, elitism and classroom centered instruction from their communities. Of course the availability of technology to deliver instruction has been a contributing factor from the use of the mail to telephone, traveling teacher to television and radio to computer. Another

factor is the ever increasing levels of expectation among people to attain a higher degree of education and the requirements of the information society for higher levels of literacy in order to just function on a daily basis. Like the men and women in libraries who have seen the need and responded by reaching out into the community, many men and women involved with higher education have loosed the bonds of tradition and committed themselves to bringing higher education into the grasps of those who want and need it; taking the personal life needs of an increasing adult population into consideration. Educational outreach has often been criticized by the scholars of academic tradition, but few institutions can be named which have not been challenges to the innovator. This topic will be discussed a bit more later in this presentation, but suffice it to say here that innovation in education is a reality, and the developing technology is having and a dynamic impact on it. Since our colleges, schools and departments are a part of higher education, we too must examine carefully our own roles, responsibilities and prejudices as we prepare information professionals and attempt to meet their continuing educational needs.

Some Background about South Carolina

The College of Library an Information Science began as the College of Librarianship in 1971 based on a philosophy of innovation and colleagiality which still is a guide to a faculty faculty which has no member of the original planning or teaching team on it. Until 1977, there were no systematically developed plans for offering academic credit at sites other than the

Columbia campus; however, a number of courses intended primarily for initial and recertification credit for school librarians as well as a very limited number of courses required for the master's degree were offered on an irregular basis. Beginning in 1983, a systematic plan to provide classes on a regular and systematic basis to one location in the state was implemented. That currently is underway and has proven to be successful to the point that two other locations in the state are being studied and an orchestrated effort is being planned to provide classes in these areas. One of the key elements in this developing outreach program has been the availability and proven success of television as a delivery medium. Were it not for this, it would be impossible to commit the College to such an ambitious project. Again, this background is provided to illustrate the evolutionary nature of our outreach program and the extent to which we believe in its necessity and quality.

In South Carolina we currently have a shortage of librarians. This is good news and bad news. Good because we enjoy a certain amount of security in that the College is needed to prepare new professionals, bad because of the limited service available to people in the communities which have the shortage. The outreach efforts to educate information professionals are intended to assist these communities.

School library media specialists make up a large part of our service audience, especially for continuing education. State law requires that School Media Specialists complete 6 hours of course work each 6 years to renew their certification. Of the 6 hours,

3 must be taken in the discipline, library and information science, and 3 may be taken in the discipline or in a related discipline or topic area in education generally. South Carolina has a very active community of information professionals in business, industry, health services, higher education, government, and a handful of independent information agents, who rightfully expect the College to provide continuing education experiences for them. It is obvious, therefore, that the College has a community which needs our expertise.

Although South Carolina is a relatively compact state, the time and traveling conditions for a person to commute to Columbia are burdens and constitute substantial risk. This is especially true for those attending evening classes when the individual taking the class usually has been working all day, makes the drive to Columbia, participates in class and then must drive home. We offer many of the school related courses in the late afternoon which gives the full-time teacher or media specialist the opportunity to get to class after work without penalty. But that also means the person is on the road at night and has to go to work early the next morning after a fairly exhausting previous day.

Continuing educational experiences which have provided for Continuing Education Credits (CEU) but not graduate academic credit have been offered primarily as one-day, all-day experiences. Some efforts have been made to take these experiences to other locations, but, with the exception of school library media related activities, the unique requirements of special, academic and public library communities usually function

best with persons coming to Columbia which is the geographic center of the state. Many persons also live in areas without access to major library collections and almost none has an adequate library and information science collection from which to draw. This means another trip to a major library, usually back again to Columbia to complete assignments or for follow-up activities. Inter-library loan programs are excellent, but the amount of material needed for class related activities or special interest concerns make that option less productive in many instances; therefore, a trip to Columbia is required. None of these foster the most creative use of the educational experience and, in fact, can cause a certain alienation from and resentment toward the University and the College. As a tax-supported institution, there are certain responsibilities to the people of the State for which we are accountable. As long as the quality of the experiences offered or the overall contribution of the institution to society is not endangered, the good will and specific needs of the people must be given a high priority .

We frequently hear that teachers tend to teach the way they were taught, in fact there is some empirical evidence which substantiates this claim. While there is no empirical evidence that I have been able to identify, I like to think that librarians might show a tendency to develop programs based on the modeling behavior of their academic instructors--if the academic program reaches out to the student, perhaps that student will, in turn, reach out with services and programs when she or he begins to practice the profession. I could very well be wrong, but

there seems to be some logic in that which may be the basis for another research project. Be that as it may, I feel strongly about the commitment to reach out into the community served by the University. The primary purpose of this outreach is to develop effective library programs by providing professionals with effective education which means exploring alternative delivery systems, of which teleconferencing has been one of the most exciting.

The Use of Video in the College

History of the Use

From the beginning of the College, members of the faculty have used television as a delivery medium in the classroom, to study such interpersonal activities as the reference and job interviews and for individual faculty to videotape themselves for personal development. The first time that producing a videotape for instruction arose was when the person responsible for the units which included Dewey Decimal and Library of Congress Classification systems explored the possibility of developing a self-instructional package using video taped lessons and follow up reading and activity assignments. After meeting with the producers in the Instructional Services Center, the University's audiovisual design and production unit, it was decided that the time involved to produce an effective series was not available and the project was abandoned.

A year or so later, representatives from the State Department of Education came to the College with a proposal to videotape a children's literature class while it was being taught

in a traditional classroom setting. This was to be sent out over the South Carolina Educational Television Network (SC-ETV) for recertification credits and continuing education for school library media specialists. The faculty who taught in the area felt that this would not be the best use of the medium, and the proposal was turned down with the understanding that exploration would be made of all alternatives for meeting the expressed needs of the media specialists and the Department of Education. After a great deal of negotiation, a modest amount of money was appropriated to the College for hiring additional researchers to work with SC-ETV to produce a videotape series in the literature of early childhood. Dr. Pam Barron and Jennifer Burley, members of the College's adjunct faculty, were employed to complete the library research and function as editors and reviewers of the scripts for the series. We were fortunate to have available a professional script writer for the project, Rick Sebak, a member the SC-ETV staff who later accepted the job of on-camera host for the series. The development of the telecourse took over two years to complete, involved several members of the College faculty, an advisory team from several academic departments in the University and several state agencies with estimated direct and matching costs of over $300,000.00.

The series forms the basis for Jump Over the Moon: Sharing Literature with Young Children, a course intended for those working with children at birth to about nine years of age. It has won the Region III of the National University Continuing Education Association Award for Excellence, the first telecourse to do so, and is currently being used by over 20 colleges,

universities and consortia literally around the world. At the University of South Carolina it is offered over open circuit broadcast for graduate and undergraduate credit every Fall and Spring semester. With the study guide and book of readings developed specifically for it, the series has been used as a telecourse, within a traditional classroom course and aspart of an independent study. Development of a parent's guide and suggested procedure for using the series with parents is currently underway.

The close working relationship with the Office for Telecommunications Instruction on the Jump telecourse and the research which went into justifying the use of television for instruction led to the exploration of other uses of television in the College's pre-service and continuing education programs. At the time, the colleges of Engineering and Business were offering complete degree programs and had been since 1969 using a combination of live and videotaped programming through the SC-ETV Network. Engineering's APOGEE (A Program of Graduate Engineering Education) and Business Administration's MBA-ETV, involved about 700 students each semester. This, along with realizing that over twenty other colleges and departments in the University involving over 2500 students each year used TV for delivery, including a substantial portion of the graduate program requirements for Social Work as well as course work in Education, English, History, Nursing and Science, made an experimental use of the medium by the College less threatening.

A great deal of discussion and debate went on in faculty

meetings for several weeks when the proposal was made to teach Information Sources and Services, a required course in the graduate program, using teleconferencing. Although there was, and still is, a concern for using this mode of delivery, a consensus was to try it. On-going evaluation during the course as well as comparison of grade profiles to previous classes of the same course; comparison of grades on exams, papers and projects; attitudes toward the class by studio and camera class members and evaluations of the course using the form adopted for all required courses showed no statistical differences among part-time/full-time or studio/camera class members. Only 2 class members out of 71, including 18 studio class members, disagreed with the statement that the College should continue to offer courses using teleconferencing. (Able)

Based on that response, classes have been offered every semester using teleconferencing. These have included the following ones:

LIBR 703-Foundations of Information Sources and Services
LIBR 797m-Microcomputers in School Library Media Programs
LIBR 704-Foundations of Administration
LIBR 797t-Foundations of Technology in Library and Information Science
LIBR 758-Selection and Evaluation of Nonbook Media for Libraries
LIBR 797a-Collection Management
LIBR 758-Acquisitions
LIBR 705-Foundations of Research in Library and Information Science

In addition to offering LIBR 759-Sharing Literature with Young Children every Fall and Spring semester, we have begun to offer LIBR 797c-The New Literacy, a course in computer literacy developed by the Southern California Consortium and the Annenburg Foundation. The latter is taught by an alumni of the College who

works in the Faculty Support unit of the University's Computer Services Division.

Teleconferencing courses which are scheduled to be taught in the near future include LIBR 702-Foundations of Organization and Retrieval and LIBR 797t-Effective Use of Libraries and Other Information Resources, a course for school personnel to assist in the effective use and evaluation of school library media programs.

Quality Control Concerns

Every effort has been made to provide quality educational experiences using teleconferencing. Among those efforts are the following ones:

1. We require the same admissions standards for students who take course work at a different site, whether by television or in a traditional classroom.
2. If a course is offered using teleconferencing or on a site other than the Columbia campus, faculty use the same syllabus and assignments.
3. The same faculty, regular or adjunct, is used to teach courses using teleconferencing as in the traditional classroom.
4. Adjunct faculty, whether teaching in a traditional classroom or via teleconferencing, serve an apprenticeship program with the faculty member who usually teaches the course.

5. The same evaluation form is used for evaluation of courses offered by teleconferencing, adjunct faculty and at sites other than Columbia.
6. The same procedure for course approval through the College faculty, Graduate School and University are used for all courses.
7. The same number of class-time contact hours of faculty with students are required of all courses.
8. Faculty who teach courses using teleconferencing or at sites other than the Columbia campus do so within the normal teaching load for the particular semester in which they are responsible for such courses.
9. Faculty who are teaching a course for the first time using teleconferencing usually are given a reduced class load in the preceding semester to prepare for it.

In many ways this is monitoring which Frances Aversa, former Director of Research and Evaluation for the University of Mid-America cautions us "Though potentially exciting and useful to program planners, action research is not truly evaluation. Nor is monitoring evaluation in the strictest sense. A management or student information system is an all but indispensable aid to both evaluation and research activities but is not itself evaluation." (Aversa, p.323) With this caveat in mind we are currently in the process of doing a follow-up of alumni in which opinions about teleconferencing, adjunct faculty and away from Columbia courses are being requested. In addition we also are currently in the process of doing a follow-up of all persons who

have taken courses on sites other than the Columbia campus and course work by way of teleconferencing. When compared with information available from other types of higher educational experiences with teleconferencing, this should provide a rather substantial evaluation of teleconferencing as applied to Library and Information Science at South Carolina.

We are extremely fortunate to have the support of talented, well educated ad committed personnel in the units which support the teaching functions using teleconferencing or off-campus course work. These are essential ingredients for quality education to take place. The instructor is freed to concentrate on developing the course intellectually and conceptually and to teach it with time to give students personal attention because of the support units. On our campus these are the Office for Telecommunications Instruction which is primarily responsible for coordinating the use of instructional radio and television, including production and support; Graduate Regional Studies which coordinates USC courses provided on campuses other than the Columbia Campus and cooperates with Telecommunications Instruction to facilitate services to teleconferencing courses; and the Instructional Services Center which provides a full range of audiovisual production support as well as the directors, producers and technical staff to send the course through the communications systems. Without these support groups, none of our attempts at outreach would be possible. I encourage each of you to consider the availability of these professionals and nurture your relationship with them as you attempt to make non-

traditional education a part of your efforts. The services include consultation with faculty to help them understand the system and its use, reproduction of syllabi and handout materials, mailings including textbooks, toll-free telephone services for students to talk with instructors as well as general "hand holding" and encouragement.

WHICH COURSES TO OFFER?

One of the questions asked early in our experience was which courses would lend themselves to teleconferencing and which would not. The literature of media selection provides some guidelines, one of which comes from Gagne who suggests that no "single medium is likely to have properties that make it best for all purposes" and "most instructional functions can be performed by most media." (Gagne, p.364) One of the world's foremost authorities on the use of television for instruction as well as the selection of media for instruction generally, William Schramm says:

> The act of selecting a medium or media of instruction is not like looking in an engineering handbook for a field strength formula, nor in a road atlas for the most direct route. To the extent that selection is a rational act, the decision maker is likely to have to consider a skein of complex information. His search for that information will lead him within the media to the message. It will lead him to consider carefully the needs and abilities of the students he wants to teach, the precise nature of the learning events he wants to bring about, and the media coding system most likely to bring them about. If he is concerned with a large system, it will force him consider costs, availability of personal and technical resources, and the relation of the proposed investment to the larger needs and resources of the system. And if the medium or combination of media has been used in a comparable situation for a comparable purpose, he will certainly want to ascertain and weigh that field experience. This kind of procedure, rather than cookbook of recipes--use television for this, use filmstrips for that, use CAI for this other--is the kind of guidance we can expect from existing literature at this time. (Schramm, p.24)

His now classic review of the literature led him to conclude that there is not significant difference in using television to teach and using traditional media. (Schramm, p.28) Other reviewers of the literature have concluded the same thing and also conclude from their reviews that when a significant difference does occurs, it is more likely to favor instructional television than traditional delivery methods. (Coast, p.65)

Based on this, how then do we select? Dare we admit to David Hawkridge's rather bleak conclusion regarding the Open University's selections of media which "are controlled by logistical, financial and internal political factors rather than by soundly based and clearly specified psychological and pedagogical considerations. I don't like admitting this: it seems as though it is not to the credit of the University, a leader in the multimedia field. But I don't feel too defensive about it. The fact is that instructional researchers and designers have not provided even the foundations for constructing strong practical procedures for selecting media appropriate to given learning tasks." (Schramm, p.25)

Our response has been to offer the class not thecourse when we teach using teleconferencing. By this I mean we select those courses which have a high proportion of lecture/demonstration techniques as major components for class delivery in the traditional classroom. This means that we offer the students the opportunity to attend the class using the interactive television system. Each student is expected to complete assignments, including consultations with the instructor, usually by phone, using the same appropriate resources and methods as if she or he

were attending class on the Columbia campus. Frequently this means meeting with members of the course locally for group projects, coming to the Columbia campus to use the library and information resources found only in the University's Thomas Cooper Library or going to some other major library for materials. In cooperation with the Office of Telecommunications Instruction, Graduate Regional Studies, and the libraries of the other 8 campuses of the University, every effort is made to get the resources to the student. The bottom line, however, is that the student is ultimately responsible for securing the necessary resources beyond that which can be provided by these groups. The significant advantage to the student in our college, according to the data gathered to this point, is that they may come to Columbia during a time which is more convenient to them and, having the class delivered, they feel less hesitant in expending resources and energy to come when it is necessary for completing assignments or attending traditional classroom sessions on the Columbia campus.

FACULTY CONCERNS

Any approach to a situation, problem or procedure which is different from the traditional or common practice is bound to be viewed skeptically by those who have an investment in the traditional. The investment may be intellectual in that individuals believe that the way things are accomplished now are valid and require no changes to keep them so; pragmatic in that the new way requires significant investments of time, money or

other resources which are unnecessary; or emotional in that many of us tend to fear the unknown and are uncomfortable with any changes.

Dirr points out that barriers to the use of television for instruction are 1) lack of money to support the effort; 2) lack of faculty commitment to the use of the medium; 3) lack of trained support staff. (Dirr, p.8) We have been extremely fortunate at USC to have a sophisticated telecommunications system in place and the available air time to experiment with that delivery system. We also are extremely fortunate to have a highly trained, creative and supportive technical staff to provide production services and an instructional support team which is committed to the users of the system and the high ideal of improved education in the State through the use of telecommunications.

This leaves us with Dirr's other concern, faculty commitment. The faculty in the College has never refused to participate in any of the telecommunications or outreach activities. Unfortunately, there are no systematic attempts to instruct faculty in the use of telecommunications for instruction at the University although Telecommunications, ISC and GRS are always willing to share their expertise. There are skeptical views of the new technology and concerns among some faculty in the College as well as within the total university community. Anyone attempting such activities should be aware of these feelings and perceptions and give them careful attention if they attempt similar projects. Formal instruction, in my opinion, would be of value for all faculty, but informal

communications through memos and everyday conversations, along with presentations of findings from evaluations.

Dirr goes on to report in the Higher Education Utilization Study sponsored by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the National Center for Educational Statistics other restraints as far as faculty are concerned, resistance because of lack of departmental funds, programs do not meet academic needs and standards, courses are unadaptable to TV, it adds to the faculty work load and the professional reward structure does not recognize the efforts. (Dirr, p.8) He reports that students, on her her other hand, report no major barriers and that TV is not burdensome, depersonalizing or viewed as easy credit. It is seen as no more relevant and informative than traditional classes but worth while and appropriate for her areas of study inwhich it was used. (Dirr, p.10)

As far as students in the College are concerned, in all of the attempts to gather opinions of those who have participated in the teleconference courses, we have found that the vast majority have indicated through questionnaire response, end-of-class evaluation and informal interviews that they conform to Dirr's findings. Many indicate that they would not be in the program were it not for these courses while others express appreciation for having a different access to courses they believe to be of equal quality to the traditional classroom based course.

With our outreach efforts we have found that the faculty work load increases somewhat because more students are attracted to the courses. Faculty having to drive to other locations

usually means a full day must devoted to that course. Teleconferencing increases the number of students often dramatically, but the work load may be considered less than having to travel to other sites, conduct the class, have local consultation time and return to Columbia. There is no doubt, however, that the work load is increased and as the popularity and reports of success grow, it is expected to increase even more. The point to consider, I believe, is now that we know it works, we must begin to refine it and consider each problem or concern related to it. We did not know it would work at all before we tried it.

Sheehan points out that faculty are often reluctant to relinquish control to a medium which they do not understand and one which, I think, carries the stigma of being an anti-intellectual symbol in our society. Evans in two separate studies (Evans 1968, 1984) has pointed out that teachers have a great deal of suspicion, fear and contempt for some technology including television as a medium for instructional delivery. Part of this may come from an honest questioning of the method, lack of preparation, lack of training in the use of media generally, lack of education in the use of television in particular or being on camera which, in itself, is frightening enough to keep some instructors away from the medium. Wiesner suggests that some of the reluctance to use telecourses may come from "the reluctance of telecourse designers to specify instructional processes in course design." (Wiesner, p.218) Sheehan points out that the reluctance may also come from "sheer conservatism" on the part of the faculty (Sheehan, p. 132).

Whatever the concern or reluctance, Wagner points out that these concerns must be considered as costs to the total project or instructional effort and, as such, must be considered in the decision to teach using telecommunications technology. (Wagner, p.198)

Roundtree provides additional thoughts:

> Our schools, colleges and universities are constitutionally resistant to change. 'Yes but . . . is the automatic response to would-be innovators. In view of the hordes of unvalidated fads and fancies with which education is constantly assailed, this stance has some survival value. It only becomes deplorable when the instinct for self-preservation swamps the need for self-renewal. Different participants, e.g., the 'old guard' vs the 'young turks', will, of course, differ in their views as to whether or not this is happening in their particular institution . . . Why should individuals put their careers (or more basically their job-security) at risk by forsaking traditional practices in order to pursue a new ideal to which their colleagues and the institutional hierarchy may, at least initially, be none to sympathetic? Yet, paradoxically, many such beleagured teachers see their best chance, both of surviving personally and of regalvanizing their institutions, as lying in their capacity for identifying new educational purposes and of inventing or adopting new ways of accomplishing them. (Roundtree p. 236)

There are a number of other possible concerns which may be a part of the faculty reluctance to enthusiastically embrace telecommunications as an instructionally delivery system. An additional one may be a result of the fact that the teacher on television must realize that he or she is a member of a team and must relinquish the almost total control afforded by the traditionally scheduled class in the traditional classroom. Teleconferencing requires that participants begin on time, end on time and take breaks at at specific times, a problem with some faculty regardless of policy. There is also the need for flexibility; technology has a tendency to break down, although

not nearly as frequently as we think, and down-time is frustrating.

There will always be those attracted to higher education who primarily are interested in research and participating in the leading edge of scholarship. I am not belittling that, discounting it or claiming that it is not important and essential to the health of the institution and society, but I do believe that there also must be a component of the faculty whose primary concern is teaching those who come to or could be touched by the institution. Here also are fertile fields for research, but someone must take the time to begin setting up conditions for experimentation, accept added responsibilities for additional teaching loads and devote the time to develop innovative course content and delivery. There is as much room for research in the area of learning and course delivery in library and information science education as there is in developing the theoretical foundation of the discipline itself. If we do not have the methods, techniques and media to teach what we have learned and developed as our theories, what good will it do the practitioner and the people for whom she or her is responsible?

OTHER CONCERNS

Robin Moss extrapolates on Jennifer Rogers' notion that "one of the problems associated with distant learning is the lack of social and emotional support provided by the conventional teacher-and-class. Adult learners tend to lack confidence and to lose heart easily; distance learning can be a lonely experience."

(Moss, p.114) Most of our approaches to preventing isolation are not unique to our experience, but perhaps they deserve some discussion. We have some evidence at this point which suggests that the groups of persons who gather to participate in the teleconferencing classes begin to form local peer support groups. As a part of our assignments, we often require group projects, in the traditional class as well as the teleconferenced class. This seems to develop a good deal of enthusiasm for group membership among many of the students, but like all groups there are those who do not wish to have their autonomy invaded. The latter are frequently allowed to go their own way in both environments. The socialization of students from different parts of the State by bringing them together in Columbia is accomplished by having specific times when the entire group assembles in Columbia and activities are conducted to facilitate this socialization. There is evidence that there is no more or no less socialization among those in the traditional classes.

Another consideration of the distant learner is follow-up. Some programs involving correspondence study may provide for the initial instruction, but like the computer purchased at a ridiculously low price from a distant city which breaks down and the local service agent refuses to fix what he did not sell, the local professional has few places to turn if not to the local college or program. Establishing a strong relationship with the professional community is essential both for continuing education and consultation. The College believes strongly in the notion of follow-up and has developed and continues to nurture that

relationship with all members of the professional community as well as alumni.

The Teleconferences

In addition to our use of telecommunications to teach using telecourses and teleconferencing for class delivery, we have participated in two teleconferences. The first came as a result of a grant from the South Carolina Committee for the Humanities, the South Carolina Library Association and the South Carolina Association of School Librarians. The project was entitled The First Branch of the Palmetto Tree: Intellectual Freedom and South Carolina Libraries, the Palmetto Tree being the State's official State Tree and, the ideal proposed, the importance of intellectual freedom through preventing censorship and encouraging a broadly adopted selection policy for libraries. The focus of the project was a teleconference in which over 250 people participated at 18 sites across the State. Telecommunications, GRS and ISC were instrumental to the production which included a three hour debate among six of the country's most outspoken liberals and conservatives, including representatives from the Moral Majority, American Library Association, Eagle Forum and People for the American Way. Two hour-long sessions were included during which participants could ask questions from their remote sites or from the studio audience.

The College also participated with the College of Education and the South Carolina State Department's Office for Instructional Technology to present a live, day-long

teleconference which originated from the campus of Oklahoma State University on selecting microcomputer software for educational purposes.

Each of the attempts have been successful and plans are underway to present a teleconference on the use of online searching, one on evaluating school library media programs and one related to the history of children's literature. All of these have been and are planned to be for continued education and not for academic credits.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

The problem at hand has to do with the confluence of four distinct concerns and issues: 1) as Birkey (1984) and Lindsay (1984) argue, while androgogy has many guidelines which appear to be useful and most believe accurate in describing the needs and many of the approaches to adult learning, there has yet to be developed a solid theoretical foundation; 2) as Wiesner (1983) points out, there are many descriptive studies of telecourse instruction, both live/interactive and videotaped, but "lack of a theoretical base is readily apparent" (218) especially as applied to the adult learner; 3) as Sewart, Keegan and Holmberg write, "The theoretical underpinnings of distance education are fragile." (1983); and 4) from the late Sixties to the present, with my personal involvement with the scholarly aspects of the profession as a student and professor, I have consistently been told, debated and believe that we as a profession have no strong theoretical base. What this means is that we are attempting to teach a discipline to a group of people using a medium in a

process none of which we are sure exists, needs, works or is effective. My own feelings are that we do need to substantiate our practice as informational professionals and educators with theoretical foundations, but we must also keep in mind Marilyn Ferguson's koan-like sentence, "Just as one who makes a clearing in the forest is increasing the periphery of contact with the unknown, we are only becoming wiser about the scope of the territory we have yet to explore." (Ferguson 177) As it stands now, I am willing to take the risks, for anecdotal accounts, systematic descriptions, interviews with faculty and students along with gut reactions make me believe that we are clearing a portion of the forest which will prove valuable in all four areas.

By no means am I excusing myself from academic rigor as a scholar in the discipline or as an educator, nor am I encouraging irresponsibility among others who would offer courses of instruction which are less than the best possible. There is a risk, however, in any innovation. As Karl Popper has said, "At best we have only a vague idea what our problem really consists of. How, then, can we produce an adequate solution? Obviously, we cannot. We must first get better acquainted with the problem. But how? My answer is simple: by producing an inadequate solution, and by criticizing it." (Roundtree, p.1) Taking risks -- reasonable to the potential damage done to students or the institution -- is a critical part of being in the dynamic profession of education. Refusing to take reasonable risks by clinging to tradition or refusing to practice that which has no

theoretical foundation is far more dangerous, because those approaches perpetuate the mediocre and fail to build theory which itself is a description of attempts to reveal truth by attacking the unknown. " We would be in a fine fix if the surgeon only performed those operations he is 'comfortable' with, or the carpenter refused to use any tool but the hammer because he likes the 'feel' of it." (155 Rowntree)

Richardson points out that "the new technologies can't just be added on; in some cases they require a rethinking of the total educational system in order to be viable." (65) Dare I say it? -- Do we have proof that what we are doing in our traditional classrooms now to provide initial and continuing education is valid and the best way to do it? As one of my friends reminds me each time we talk, "Your opinion is just as good as mine until there is some way to prove it." Thus far teleconferencing appears to me to be a valid way to deliver educational experiences in Library and Information Science. Perhaps as we consider the changing nature of the adult learner and the academic markets we must share, corner or loose related to their education, we will ask ourselves questions and dare take risks which might improve education in the classroom and lecture hall as well as on the electronic signal.

CONCLUSION

Again, I want to thank the coordinators of this exciting event for allowing me to participate and you for your kind attention. Information and its effective transfer to the people

who need it I believe is the major key to unlock the doors to personal growth, economic well being, mutual understanding and appreciation, the spiritual journey and world community. It is essential for our fragile planet to have men and women who understand the needs for information transfer and take the risks of going beyond convention to facilitate that transfer among the peoples of the world. The promise of technology in this process is only as good as our willingness to harness it and use it for positive human benefits.

Edward R. Murrow once said "The trouble with TV is that it is like a sword rusting in the scabbard during a battle for survival." (Stepp) I urge you to take this sword out and try it in the battle against ignorance, in the battle to make our discipline strong and its practitioners fully functioning; in the battle to make real swords into plowshares; to realize fully Dean Shera's concept of optimum social utility of the graphic record.

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